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**Course Introduction and Expectations**

**U.S. History ACP**

**2014-2015**

**Course Description:**

Welcome to U.S. History ACP. We will begin our study of American history with a thorough examination of the United States Constitution. In order to understand much of American history, it is important to have a deep knowledge of the foundations of the American government. After this unit, we will explore the history of the United States from the Founding period through the present, moving through this information thematically. In total, we will examine United States history through four themes: Democracy and Authority, Equality and Hierarchy, Individualism and Collectivism and The Juggling Act: Foreign Policy.

**Essential Questions for the year:**

Throughout this year we will continually turn to the following essential questions and try to formulate thoughtful and analytical answers based on the knowledge gained through our various units of study:

1. Considering that the Constitution limits the power of the government to make change, why and through what mechanisms has there been change in people’s lives?
2. How and why have foreign policy and domestic policy aligned throughout U.S. history?

3. Has the United States become a more inclusive nation over time regarding people’s ability to gain the privilege of American citizenship regardless of personal characteristics?

**Themes:**

We will study each theme independently, tracing it from the founding to the present. This means that we will cycle through American history four distinct times, each with a different perspective and focus.

A thematic approach to the study of history is advantageous because it allows students to:

* Evaluate and analyze how key issues in American history transcend time and space.
* Engage more meaningfully with material, as we study it from a range of perspectives that resonate in different ways with different students.
* Learn equally about all eras of United States history without rushing to get to “the end.”
* Understand how various aspects of American history cohere to form a narrative of the American experience.

*Term One: Democracy and Authority*

This unit examines the tension between the increasing power of the federal government and the rights of the people in the United States. This theme will explore how the power of the federal government fluctuates at various times depending on circumstances, including the cultural and political climate.

Focus Question for Theme:

* How effectively has the federal government maintained its authority while protecting the rights of the individual and of states?

*Term Two: Equality and Hierarchy*

This unit explores how different groups throughout history have experienced movement on the spectrum of full equality and being part of a rigid social/political/economic structure. Focus Questions:

* Through what mechanisms have marginalized groups gained greater de jure (legal) and de facto (practical) equality?
* Through what mechanisms have marginalized groups gained greater equality in both law and in practice?

*Quarter Three: Individualism and Collectivism*

This unit examines the shift in the U.S. from a structure of loosely connected individuals to a society with greater interdependence. These connections provided mutual benefits to individuals, groups or the nation but at the expense of rights and power. We will determine how these connections emerged politically, economically and socially, as well as the impact of their development.

Focus Question:

* Have collective actions/legislation/reforms better ensured American ideologies (American Dream, liberty, freedom, individualism, equality) over time?

Term Four: *American Foreign Policy – A Juggling Act*

This unit examines the motives and methods of United States involvement in foreign affairs. The three threads of U.S. involvement are unilateralism (lone wolf), ideological expansionism and practical interests.

Focus Questions:

* Why at times has the United States pursued a multilateral foreign policy and at other times elected to proceed unilaterally?
* Have United States foreign policy decisions furthered American ideologies and national interests?
* Assess the costs and benefits of American foreign policy on the rest of the world.

**Respect & Class Citizenship:**

Each student in this class has valuable opinions, ideas, and knowledge to contribute. It is extremely important that you respect your classmates. This does not mean that you have to agree with all that is shared, but it does mean that as a member of this class you have the responsibility to respectfully disagree. Every member of this class should feel comfortable expressing his/her opinions, asking questions, and sharing ideas.

**Completing Homework Assignments:**

Aside from reading and note taking, you will be assigned various tasks to complete for homework. Some homework will be collected and graded for accuracy and completeness, while others will be scanned for effort and completeness. Class discussions revolve around topics that directly relate to homework assignments, thus it is important to read the text thoroughly. You should be able to hold insightful conversations about the text and be an active participant in classroom discussions. Many of the primary and secondary sources that are assigned are challenging and require students to put in their full effort in order to understand the meaning.

You are expected to have your assignment in hand and ready to go at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be accepted for reduced credit the next class period. It is your responsibility to show me the late assignment. If you have an unexcused absences or a cut you will receive no credit for your assignment (see student handbook).

**Large Assignments:**

Larger assignments like, papers and projects, will be scheduled in advance so that students have a reasonable length of time to complete the assignment. I suggest that students always keep a copy of their work whether it is a hard or electronic copy. There will be no extension on papers and projects except in major emergencies. Unexcused late papers and projects will be accepted for only one day after the due date and will receive no higher than a 70. If you have an unexcused absences or a cut you will receive no credit for your assignment (see student handbook).

**Junior Thesis:**

Juniors are required to complete a Junior Thesis Project. This is the culminating project of the skills acquired throughout your coursework in the Social Studies Department at WHS. The thesis will be broken down into various steps and pieced together. You will be receiving more detailed instruction on both the process and final product.

**Attendance and Make-up Work:**

Come to class! In order for you to get the most out of class it is extremely important that you are in class participating in discussions, debates, and cooperative exercises. Daily attendance will be taken and the school policy on attendance will be followed.

Be on time! You’d be amazed at how much information can be packed into a five-minute period. It is distracting to your classmates and to me when students come to class late. The school policy on tardies will also be enforced.

You are responsible for your make up work—homework, in class notes, and exams. In order to receive credit for your work, I must receive, or it becomes a zero.

If you are attending a field trip be sure to get the assignments you will be missing and hand in the assignments that are due before you leave on the field trip. Please review the school’s policy on absences (field trips included) and make up work in the student handbook.

**Class Website:**

In addition, you can find updated lessons, handouts and homework on my wikispace. Please bookmark <http://bartelsusacp.wikispaces.com>.

**Extra Help:**

It is my goal to help each student achieve his/her very best in this course. I am more than willing to assist you with any aspect of this course and will do my best to ensure your success if you put forth your best effort. Please feel free to talk to me if you have questions, concerns, or problems. I am often available before and after school, but please make an appointment with me to ensure I am around when you come for help. Remember: the Social Studies lab is a resource that can be used for assistance when writing papers, before a test, or on homework. Check the schedule for assigned periods.

**Grade Breakdown: Quarters One and Four**

Class Citizenship (see attached for breakdown) 10%

Assessments (tests, in-class essays, quizzes, large projects) 65%

Term Assignments (homework, in-class group work, 25%

small projects)

**Quarters Two and Three:**

Class Citizenship (see attached for breakdown) 10%

Assessments (tests, in-class essays, quizzes, large projects) 55%

Term Assignments (homework, in-class group work, 15%

small projects)

Junior Thesis 20%

**Class Citizenship Expectations & Self Evaluation**

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Quarter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class Citizenship is an important component of your quarter grade in this class. My expectations for you are outlined below. Please consider your performance over the term and evaluate yourself.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expectations: | Always | Mostly | Some-times | Rarely |
| You are prepared for class when it begins. You are seated, notebook is open, ready to listen. (You are not in the hall, in the bathroom, getting a drink, tissue, etc…) |  |  |  |  |
| You have all relevant materials in hand ready to work. |  |  |  |  |
| You volunteer in classroom discussions. |  |  |  |  |
| You refrain from being disruptive, interrupting, and making rude comments. |  |  |  |  |
| You respect the rights of others to speak. |  |  |  |  |
| You work on-task during in class assignments. |  |  |  |  |
| You fulfill your portion of in class assignments. |  |  |  |  |
| You refrain from leaving class excessively. |  |  |  |  |
| You are responsible for your absences (reschedule tests and quizzes, show me make up work, get notes, etc…) |  |  |  |  |

After you have self-evaluated your in class performance I want you to consider what you think your class citizenship grade should be. Provide a letter grade and a brief explanation of why you deserve this grade. I will consider your thoughts when determining your class citizenship grade.

I would give myself a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\_ in this class because: